

PACKING vs Springfield Illinois

Wagon

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Curios and Relics  
Furniture  
Chairs  
Rocking Chair – Springfield  
Home

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

*Given Furniture*

May 14, 1934

Mr. Charles F. Hanson  
Lincoln Insurance Company  
503 Stirling Bldg.  
Houston, Texas.

Dear Mr. Hanson:

When at the Fair last year I noted that many of the Lincoln exhibits were the property of the Lincoln Insurance Company. Our family is in possession of a walnut rocker that was part of the Lincoln's parlor set in the Springfield home. When the Lincolns moved to Washington this chair was bought by my great-aunt who later brought it with her when the Cumming family moved from Springfield and came to Texas.

We are anxious to sell the chair and I thought that you would be able to put us in touch with the proper person to write to and that being in the city would be able to satisfy yourself as to the good faith of the family. I have an affidavit from my aunt (who lived with the original purchaser) and a letter from Mr. Oldroyd who was at one time custodian of the Lincoln house in Springfield and who knew the Cumming family when they lived there.

If you care to see the chair and these papers, call me or let me know to whom I could write.

Very truly

*(Mrs) Marian Cumming*

Carnegie Branch Library  
1209 Henry St.  
Houston.

P.9752

I can be reached

*L-1230*



## Chip off the Old Chair

The solid comfort of our **Lincoln** Rocker has made a lot of good friends for Harden. Now, for their little friends, here's the junior-sized **Tad** Rocker. Exactly like the adult version, scaled down for the companionable rocking of your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A thousand fabrics to choose from. All exposed wood hand-finished solid cherry from Northern New York forests. Send for Harden's colorful 168 page catalog.

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NYT 1019



Harden Furniture Company  
McConnellsville, N.Y. 13401

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FINE FURNITURE — THE *Harden* TRADITION

Oct. 19, 1975



PM Reproductions

# Build LINCOLN'S Rocking Chair

Here are step-by-step instructions  
for making a fine antique reproduction.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DAVE WARREN



In the early 1860s President Abraham Lincoln purchased a cane rocking chair for his home. According to local historians, the small walnut rocker was used by Mrs. Lincoln while sewing and to rock the Lincoln babies to sleep. Today, over 120 years later, the beloved Lincoln rocker still graces the sitting room of their Springfield, Ill., home. Now, by special permission of the U.S. Department of the Interior, you can build a reproduction of this lovely rocking chair for your home.

Begin by selecting clear, warp-free walnut boards that equal or surpass the rough dimensions given in the materials list. Since walnut is an expensive wood, it's wise to shop around. After checking with local lumberyards and hardwood retailers, stop by a wholesale hardwood distributor. Although these firms don't sell retail, they do occasionally sell "shorts"—the cut-off ends and rips from larger timbers. Shorts are perfectly good, but too small for the wholesaler to trade. If his selection of walnut shorts meets your needs, it could be a real savings.

First, surface-plane the boards to their respective thicknesses. Make cardboard templates for the various chair parts (A-D, F and I) according to the drawing. Pencil the template shapes onto the boards and cut out the chair parts. Band saw all curved parts including the compound curved top rail. Note that the back posts taper from 1½ in. thick at the seat to ¾ in. at the top.

The chair is assembled with mortise and tenon joints. Cut the mortises by first boring a series of holes and then chiseling the mortise square. Or, use a drill press fitted with a mortising chisel. Cut the tenons by hand, with a tenon saw, or on a table saw using a tenoning attachment. Also, bore holes into the front (I) and back (C) posts to accept the three dowels located under the seat. Turn the walnut dowels on a lathe, or check with woodworker supply houses for ready-turned hardwood dowels. Note that two dowels are ⅝ in. dia. and the third dowel, which spans the back posts, is ¾ in. dia.

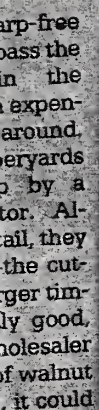
Next, rabbet the front and back posts to accept the rockers. Carefully chisel a ⅛-in.-deep × ½-in.-wide rabbet in the top rail to provide a recess for the cane. This

(Please turn to page 62)

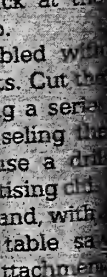
Follow our plans—including step-by-step hand caning instructions—so that you can make Mary Lincoln's solid walnut rocking chair.



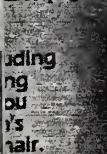
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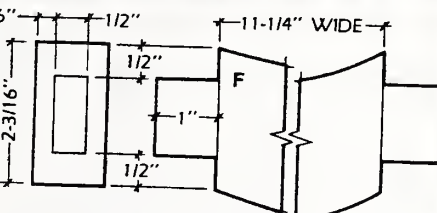
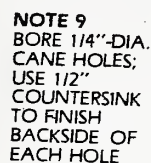
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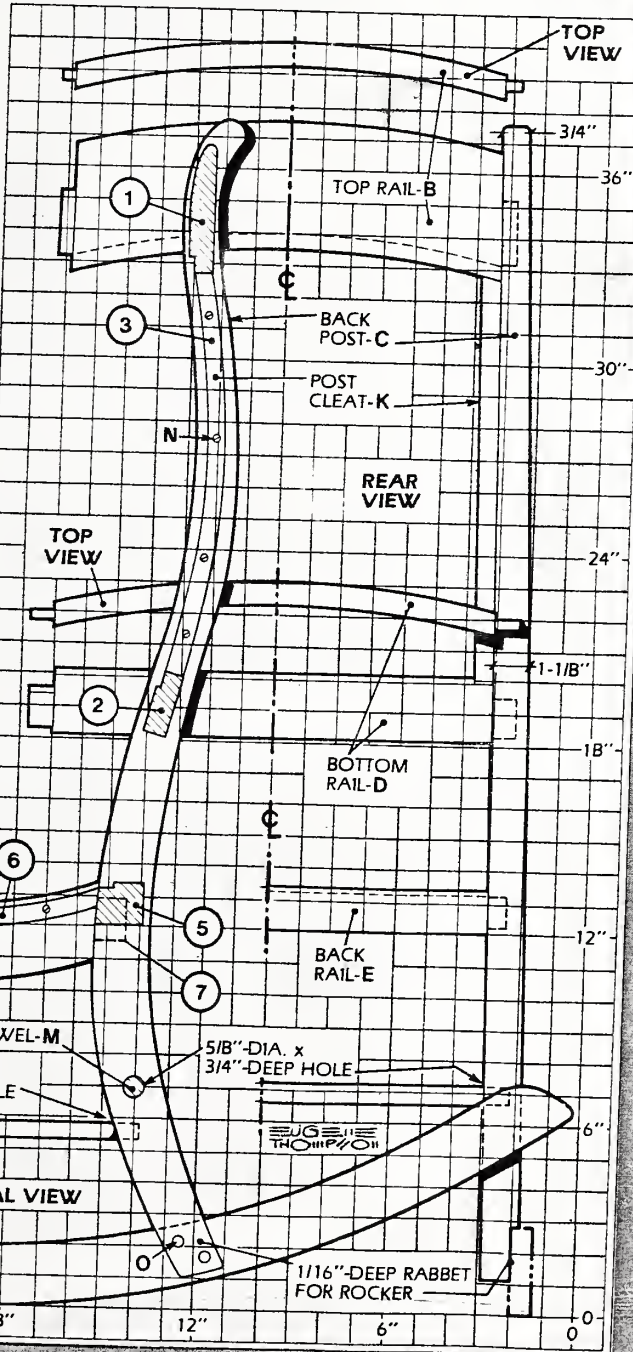
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TOP VIEW

3/4"

EACH SQ.= 1"

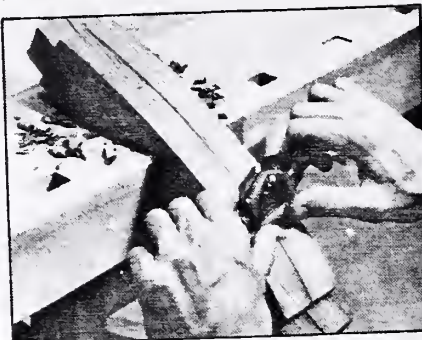




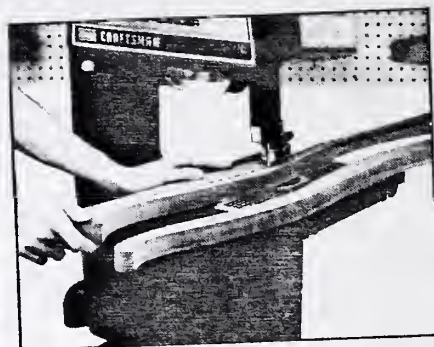
## CHAIR CUTTING AND ASSEMBLY



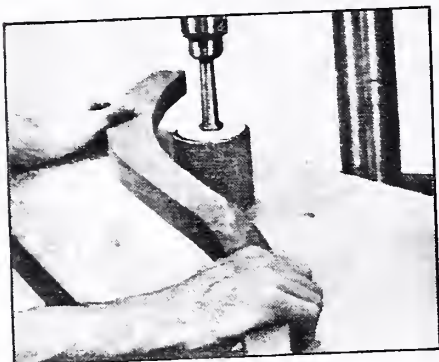
To save material, lay out the two side rails so that they share a common line-of-cut. Then cut out the pieces on a band saw.



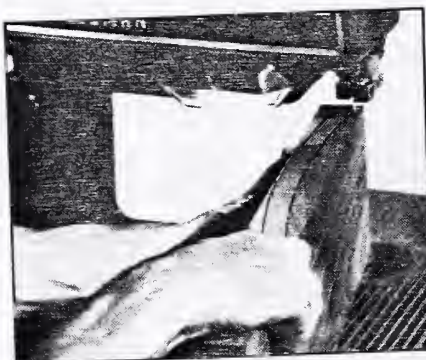
Clamp the two side rails together. Use a spokeshave to smooth the edges simultaneously. Remove all blade marks.



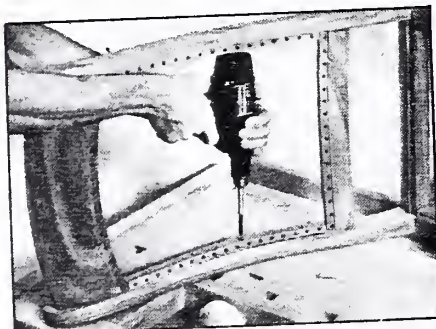
Cut out the curved back posts on the band saw following the pattern shown on page 61. Use the cutoff waste for post cleats.



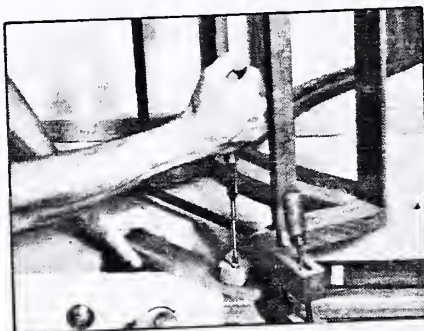
Use a drum sander chucked in a drill press to sand back posts smooth. If you are careful, you can use a belt sander instead.



Use a band saw to cut curved top rail from a 1 1/2-in.-thick walnut board. Feed workpiece slowly to avoid breaking the blade.

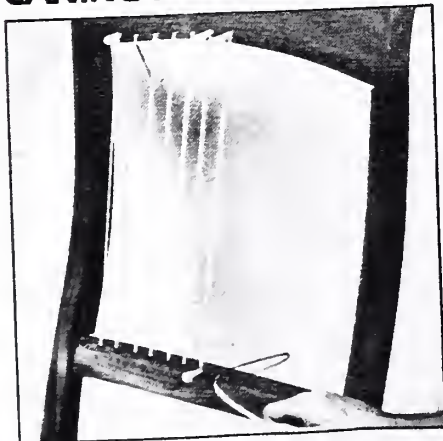


Attach the cleats to the inside of the back posts with 1 1/4-in. No. 10 f.h. screws after boring the 1/4-in.-dia. caning holes.

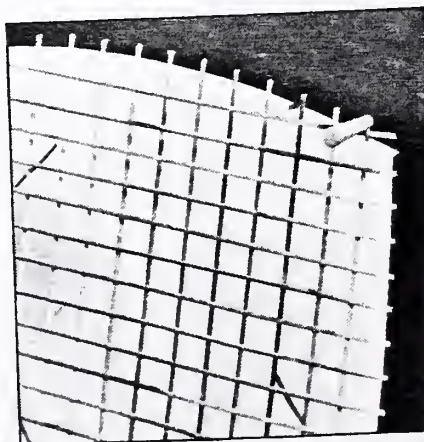


Screw the rocker to the front post with two 1-in. No. 12 f.h. screws. Counterbore screw holes to accept 1/4-in.-dia. wood plugs.

## CANING PROCEDURE



Soak the cane in water for 10 minutes, then weave it vertically starting at top left. Caning pegs hold the cane taut. Soak a second strand while working the first.



Starting at the top left, string the second strand horizontally, crossing over the vertical cane. You should pull each run tight and hold it temporarily with a peg.

## ROCKING CHAIR

(Continued from page 60)

must be cut by hand because of the compound curve of the piece. Cut the same size rabbet in the front, back and bottom rails, but this time use a router with a rabbeting cutter. Here, the rails have only single curves.

Next, bore 1/4-in.-dia. cane holes through the rabbets in the four rail pieces. Countersink the backside of each hole. The cane is secured to the back posts and side rails through cleats, not rabbets. Band-saw the cleats to match the shape of their respective chair part. Then, bore 1/4-in.-dia. holes for the cane before attaching the cleats with 1 1/4-in. No. 10 f.h. screws. Space the caning holes as shown in the drawing.

Next, sand each chair part with 120-grit abrasive paper. Dry-assemble the chair, making sure that all joints fit properly. Now, glue and clamp the chair's side assemblies. After the glue dries, join the two side assemblies with the horizontal chair parts. Check carefully to be certain that the chair is true and square, not twisted. Finish-sand with 220-grit abrasive paper. Finish the chair with a French polish: 70-percent orange shellac and 30-percent boiled linseed oil. Rub on four coats of polish using 4/0 steel wool.

(Please turn to page 64)

## MATERIALS LIST—LINCOLN ROCKER

Key	No.	Size and description (use)
A	2	9/16 × 5 × 30" walnut (rocker)
B	1	1 5/8 × 5 1/2 × 14 5/8" walnut (top rail)
C	2	1 1/8 × 5 × 38" walnut (back post)
D	1	1 1/2 × 2 × 15 1/2" walnut (bottom rail)
E	1	1 1/4 × 1 1/2 × 15 5/8" walnut (back rail)
F	2	1 1/8 × 3 1/2 × 13 1/4" walnut (side rail)
G	1	1 1/2 × 2 × 16 3/4" walnut (front rail)
H	1	5/8 × 1 5/8 × 16 3/4" walnut (stretcher)
I	2	1 1/8 × 3 × 13" walnut (front post)
J	2	5/8 × 2 × 12" walnut (seat cleat)
K	2	5/8 × 2 × 13" walnut (post cleat)
L	2	9/16"-dia. × 12" walnut dowel
M	1	5/8"-dia. × 16" walnut dowel
N	16	1 1/4" No. 10 f.h. screws
O	8	1" No. 12 f.h. screws, 1/2"-dia. × 1/2" wood plug

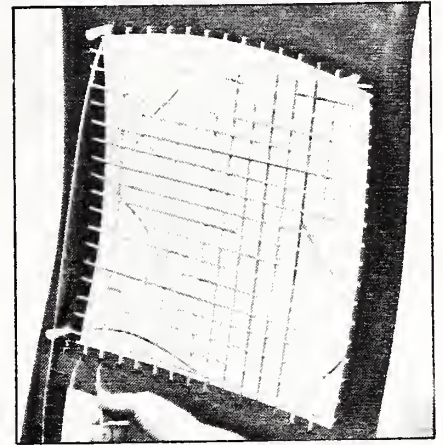
\*Rough dimensions, trim pieces as per drawing. Misc.: 1 hank medium cane, carpenter's glue, 120- and 220-grit abrasive paper, orange shellac, linseed oil, 4/0 steel wool.



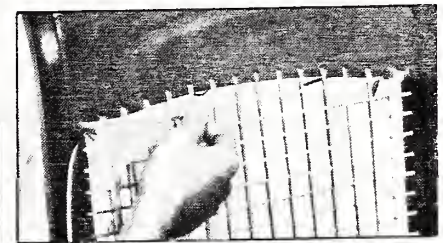
## ROCKING CHAIR

(Continued from page 62)

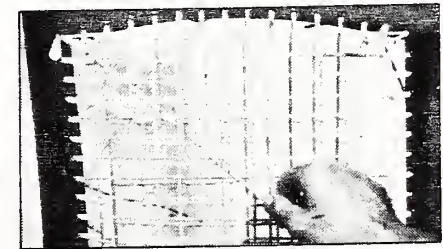
Finally, weave medium cane across the back and seat as shown. (As an alternative, use prewoven cane installed in routed grooves.) With a little patience, you'll soon be rocking in your own antique reproduction. **PM**



Repeat the first step, weaving the cane vertically in front of the horizontal cane. When stringing the cane, keep it to one side of the hole, next to the first cane.



Now, repeat the horizontal run. Weave the cane under the first-run vertical cane and over the second vertical strand. This action creates the basket weave look.



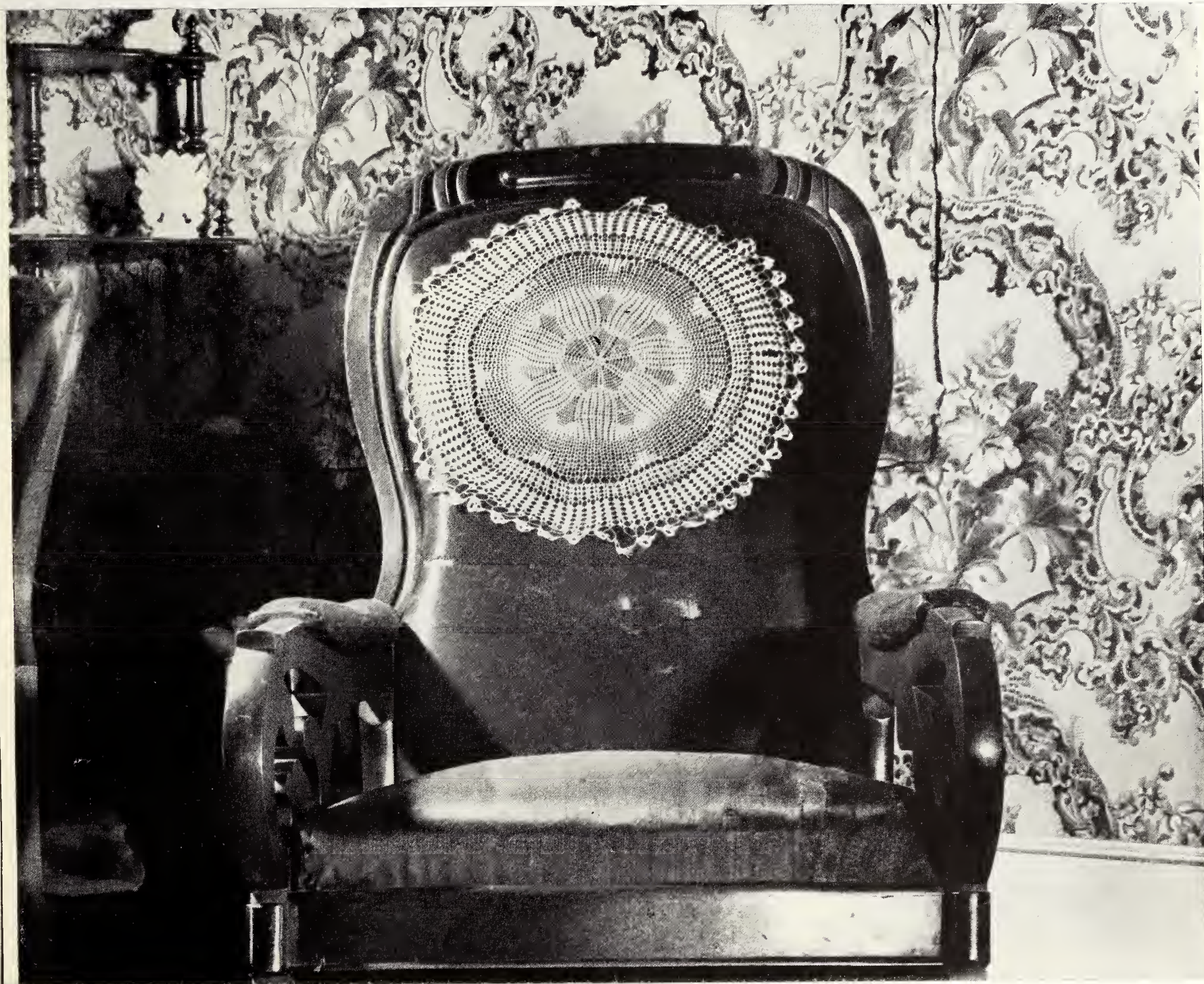
Weave diagonally from the top left to the third from bottom hole on the right side—under strands one and three, over strands two and four. Then repeat the diagonal weave from top right—over strands one and three, under strands two and four.



Work two strands of binding cane simultaneously to cover holes. Work one strand through the holes, around first strand, then back through the same hole. Tie the ends.







July 11-10-41









